

Project Startup Report

Project Name: UCIS Replacement Project – Phase 2

Agency: Unified Judicial Branch

Business Unit/Program Area: State Court Administrator's Office

Project Sponsor: Sally Holewa

Project Manager: Jim Gienger

Project Description

Unified Court Information System (UCIS) is a system originally developed in Minnesota in the 1980's and was brought to Burleigh County in North Dakota in the early 1990's. From Burleigh County, the system has gradually evolved to become the single case management system used in all 53 of North Dakota's counties. With continual modifications, enhancements and maintenance provided to the system by the State Court Administrator's office, the UCIS of today is much different from the version brought to North Dakota some 18 years ago.

This project will include the implementation of the Odyssey Case Management environment from Tyler Technologies to replace all case management functionality in the current UCIS system. Odyssey is a unified case management system that combines case management, financial management, and document management (including e-signature) on a single, integrated, platform. Further, Tyler is partnering with Wiznet and Sonant to provide the court with the tools to meet the electronic filing and interactive voice response and web payment needs.

Phase 1 of the project was completed successfully in October 2008. Phase 1 began by creating an Operations oversight group and assigning a project manager in October 2007. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in April 2008 seeking a qualified vendor to provide a Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) case management system to replace the current UCIS system. An evaluation team was created to review the nine vendor proposals submitted. Three vendors were invited to present their proposal and demonstrate their solution. The evaluation team visited sites of the two finalists. A Notice of Intent to Award was sent to the nine vendors on August 28, 2008 announcing Tyler Technologies had been selected. A contract with Tyler Technologies was signed in late October 2008.

Phase 2 planning began in October 2008 and concluded in February 2009 with the approval of a Project Plan and project schedule by the Project Sponsor and Large Project Oversight within ITD. In order to implement a solution by the end of the 2009-2011 biennium, project execution began in February 2009 with the selected vendor, Tyler Technologies, using funds currently available.

Business Need or Problem

UCIS is a comprehensive case management system used to manage all aspects of cases within the courts of North Dakota. It enables and assists the clerks of court with proactive management of case related documents, schedules, calendars, parties to a case, notices and other case related items of all case types.

While UCIS has served and continues to serve the courts well, the time is fast approaching where the design, architecture and structure of UCIS will limit its ability to continue to meet the increasing needs of the Judicial Branch and the citizens of North Dakota. The State Court Administrator's Office (SCAO) recently contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to help provide alternatives for the future of UCIS.

The NCSC report identified numerous areas that could be better served by a newer, more robust system and summarized the following needs:

1. The user interface used by UCIS is referred to as a "green screen". The users need a modern graphical interface to improve efficiency in case file processing and reduce training requirements.
2. The Judiciary and the citizens of North Dakota have increased demands for the ability to access information when they want, wherever they are, and in the format they need. UCIS, utilizing technologies available over 20 years ago, does not meet those demands. The court needs to have a system built with current database technologies and toolsets that provide the capabilities and flexibility to meet the requirements of all users.
3. UCIS was initially designed as a case management system and later modified to perform some financial management functions. The court needs a fully integrated financial module with comprehensive financial management, reporting, and controls in order to minimize the workload of the staff and eliminate many of the shadow systems currently used to manage the finances of the court.
4. UCIS does not include the varied and multiple layers of security needed to accommodate the numerous groups of people requesting access to UCIS data. The court needs a system that allows access of information based upon multiple and complex security requirements.

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| Key Metrics | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Phase 1 Project Start Date | Length of Phase 1 | Phase 1 Cost |
| October 2007 | 12 months | \$176,988 |
| Phase 2 Project Start Date | Estimated Length of Phase 2 | Estimated Phase 2 Cost |
| February 2009 | 29 months | \$8,310,000 |
| Note: \$1,051,000 is available during the current 2007-2009 biennium. The remainder of the \$8,310,000 has been requested of the Legislature. | | |

| Benefits to Be Achieved | |
|---|--|
| Phase 2 Project Objectives | Measurement Description |
| Current UCIS users of the system will be trained. Eighty percent of the new and current users trained will agree that training on the new system is more effective than it was on the old system. | Current UCIS users will be given a survey upon completion of their training related to the effectiveness of the training. Based on a Lickert scale of five, the average score of the responses will be at least 4 to be considered effective. |
| The need to access multiple screens to perform a single task will be reduced, resulting in less time and fewer keystrokes to complete the task. | Current UCIS users will be given a post implementation survey with questions related to the efficiencies of the new system. Based on a Lickert scale of five, the average score of the responses will be at least 4 to be considered efficient. |
| The technical staff will be able to configure the functions of the system more efficiently than they are able to in the current system. | The technology staff will provide a brief report, prior to implementation of the new system, on the effort involved in configuring the functions of UCIS. After implementation of Odyssey, the technology staff will provide a brief report on the effort involved in configuring the functions of the new system and also include an analysis of the improved efficiency. |
| The new system will have sufficient security to limit access to financial information and to create an audit trail for all financial transactions. | There will be an audit trail for all financial transactions, as documented in the training manual and verified through testing in the pilot phase. |
| Court staff will be able to create custom forms, notices, orders, and calendars at the local level | Upon implementation of the system, court staff will be able to create custom forms, notices, orders and calendars without affecting other users and without the need for IT staff to program the changes on their behalf, as documented in the program manual and training materials. |
| Judges and court administrators will have case management and performance measurement reports available to them upon demand. | The new case management system will include standard, monthly and quarterly case management reports and have the ability to produce ad hoc performance measurement reports, as documented in the program manual and training materials. |
| Document management and e-filing technologies will be implemented with the Odyssey case management system. | The document management functionality of Odyssey and the Wiznet e-filing solution will have successfully passed the testing and verification procedures required as part of the pilot phase of this project. |
| The court system will exchange more data with its criminal justice agency partners. | The technology staff will provide a brief report, prior to implementation of Odyssey, on the number of interfaces with UCIS. After implementation of Odyssey, the technology staff will provide a brief report on the number of interfaces developed with Odyssey. |
| Notifications to interested parties will be electronic. | Electronic notifications will successfully pass the testing and verification process of the pilot phase of this project. |

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Cost/Benefit Analysis

There are generally two reasons that an organization allocates resources to a technology project. The first is environmental (legislatively mandated or stakeholder driven), and the other being financial (the organization is expecting a significant return on their investment). Although a favorable Return on Investment (ROI) is anticipated with this project through significant efficiency gains by many stakeholders, the primary justification for implementing a new CMS is based on the environmental grounds. The technologies utilized within UCIS simply do not allow the court to meet all requirements currently identified. It is likely most requirements in the future will not be met with existing technologies in place.

The anticipated benefits include:

- More effective training for new users, or refreshing of current users, because of the more intuitive nature of a graphical user interface in a new system
- More efficient performance of most tasks, on a daily basis, such as searching for persons and case-related data, scheduling events, recording results of events, notifying parties, and generally navigating through the system
- Increased ability to modify functions and configuration settings in the system, including more finely-tuned user role-based security, because of a more modern architecture
- Better financial control through integration of financial management with case management
- More flexibility to create forms, notices, orders and calendars with the wording customized for local needs
- Greater ability of judges and court administrators to get information out of the system through reports (both standard and ad hoc), made possible because of a more modern data structure built into the system
- Greater ability to incorporate new technology in the system, such as associating electronic files with court cases (document images, audio files of proceedings and evidence, and video), and electronic filing, because of the capabilities of more modern software development tools
- Greater ability to exchange data because of built-in capabilities of the software development environment for specifying data exchanges (application programming interfaces and electronic delivery of output)
- Litigants, other justice agencies, and the public receive faster and more accurate information concerning their case(s).

Key Constraints or Risks

The key constraints for the project are:

- Necessary funding to implement the solution selected will need approval from the 2009 legislative session.
- Throughout the project, if changes occur that impact scope, cost, and/or schedule, cost will be considered most constrained, followed by schedule and finally scope.

The key risks identified for the project are:

- Resource availability, coordination, and diversion. Insufficient resources mean that appropriately skilled individuals are not available when needed. Lack of necessary skills on the project team not only causes a shortage of resources needed to get the work done, but can reduce the productivity of other team members. Reassignment of team members to another team or to work outside the project is costly in terms of time lost in obtaining a replacement and learning curve for the replacement.
- User Resistance. District Court Judges and Trial Court staff may dislike the new business processes and blame the system, the project, or the staff working on the project for the change. Agency may experience staff turnover as a result.